

GEAR UP Iowa Framework for Student Success



Introduction

This guide provides an overview of GEAR UP Iowa including essential components and requirements for partner schools. This document is designed to provide common language across all GEAR UP Iowa schools, articulate the GEAR UP Iowa framework, and explain why the framework is important for improving student results.

GEAR UP Objectives

The goal of GEAR UP is to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. In order to accomplish this goal, GEAR UP Iowa focuses on the following program objectives:

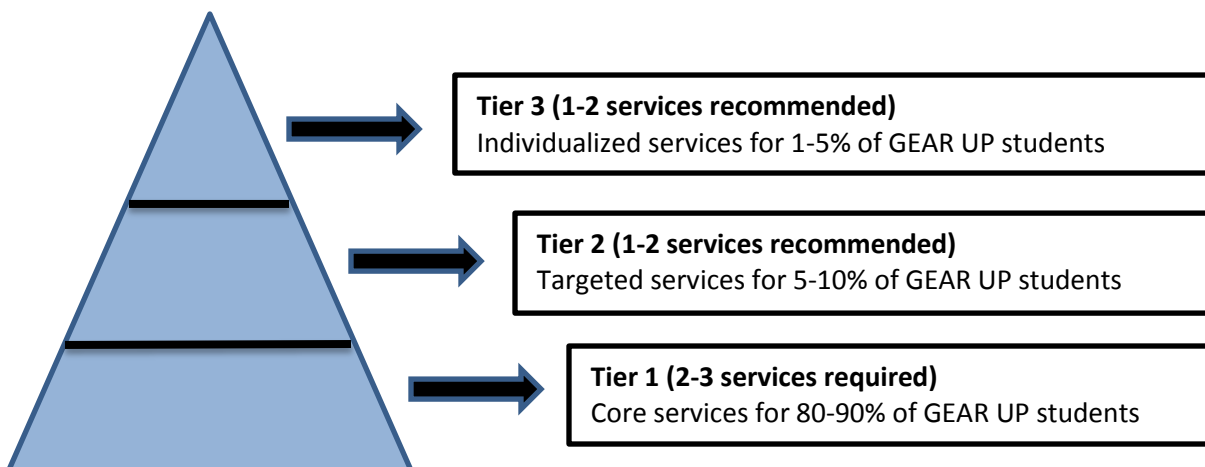
1. Increase academic performance and preparation for post-secondary education.
2. Increase the rate of high school graduation and enrollment in post-secondary education.
3. Increase GEAR UP Iowa students' and their families' knowledge of post-secondary education options, preparation, and financing.

In addition to the primary objectives of GEAR UP, there are seventeen performance measures by which the success of the GEAR UP Iowa program is determined. See appendix A for a complete list of performance measures.

Data-Driven Decision Making

GEAR UP Iowa uses a multi-tiered, data based model in order to align with state standards and district initiatives related to MTSS and RtI. The purpose of GEAR UP Iowa is not to be a stand-alone program in school districts, but rather an initiative that is integrated into the existing school framework.

Data-driven decision making is a process by which teams work together to: a) define a problem related to each GEAR UP component; b) discuss potential causes; c) determine a course of action; d) implement the action; and e) evaluate the outcome.



Essential Components

The GEAR UP Iowa framework provides a method for ensuring all cohort students receive information and preparation related to college and career readiness. There are six components of the framework and they are designed to increase and support school district initiatives around building a college going culture. Each component must be in place to ensure success for students, schools, and the GEAR UP Iowa program.

- Academic Support
- Advising
- College and Career Exposure
- College Application and Enrollment
- Family Knowledge and Engagement
- Non-cognitive Skills (optional)

The components are structured to recognize the existing efforts already in place in GEAR UP schools. Yet, they also provide opportunities for schools to assess their needs related to college and career readiness and develop new services based on those needs. The expectations for each component are outlined in the following pages.

Guidelines for Implementation

A GEAR UP Iowa Facilitator is assigned to each school district and their role is to assist in developing an Implementation Plan that meets the needs of both GEAR UP Iowa and the district/school. The Framework serves as a “menu of services” that have proven to be effective in college and career readiness efforts. Facilitators will guide schools through the process of selecting services and determining how those services will be implemented and measured.

1. Academic Support

Goal: Students build a rigorous academic foundation and develop academic behaviors essential to preparing for post-secondary pathways

General Best Practices for Academic Support:

1. Classroom based strategies where teachers continually monitor student performance and learning needs and make adjustments to improve student learning.
2. Schools create academic support opportunities during the school day, such as learning labs, to increase instructional time for academically struggling students.
3. Before and after school programs within the building that provide students tutoring or mentoring to help students prepare for class or acquire study skills.
4. Technology assisted strategies including digital and online learning applications to help students grasp difficult concepts.

Academic Support Tier 1 Services (2-3 required)
School based intervention team to identify students in need of additional support (<i>a member of this team also needs to serve on the GEAR UP Iowa School Planning Team</i>)
Differentiated instruction (<i>progress updates given by teachers on School Planning Team</i>)
Notify parents/families when a student is at-risk of not passing
Before or after school assistance in the form of tutoring or mentoring
Communication with students about available academic support resources
Academic Support Tier 2 Services (1-2 recommended)
Supplemental instruction in basic skills such as reading, math, and science
Academic enrichment for students to explore content areas outside of the classroom
Academic Clubs (e.g. literacy club, robotics club, earth club)
Study skills development
Research-based instructional intervention programs for students needing additional support
Instructional technologies
Action planning between student, parent and teacher for improving low grades (C- and below)
Weekly small group tutoring sessions
Weekly group mentoring
Academic group mentoring
Homework assistance “centers”
Academic Support Tier 3 Services (1-2 recommended)
Language instruction for students needing additional support
Intensive training programs for teachers to improve reading or math instruction and professional development in best practices
Summer reading club (online or in person)
Computer instruction
Dropout prevention
Summer enhancement program to prevent information loss
Weekly individual tutoring sessions (online or in person)
Weekly individual mentoring session (online or in person)

Suggested Data Documenting Need for Academic Support (TBD by CARTeams and School Planning Team):

- Current (if available) or prior year Iowa Assessments
- Up-to-date list of students behind in credits
- Quarterly list of students not on track to graduate
- Current list of D/F grades if possible, otherwise midterm grade report
- Annual student interest in enrichment activities or interest clubs if available
- Teacher or counselor referral

2. Advising

Goal: Provide students with the information they need to graduate high school, enroll in post-second education, and explore career opportunities

General Best Practices for Advising (adapted from College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling):

1. Set high expectations and provide support for students to choose college, technical career training, certification program, or military options after high school.
2. Academic planning for post-secondary education and advising students into rigorous academic coursework to prepare them for college courses.
3. Provide opportunities for college and career assessments, college and career exploration and selection, college affordability planning, and learning about college and career admission processes.
4. Provide supports for students to transition from high school graduation to college enrollment.

Advising Tier 1 Services (2-3 required)
Students develop a high school academic plan
Career inventory (interests, skills, values) with group interpretation
Students advised to take credits that ensure graduation and minimum requirements
Students advised to take at least the minimum requirements to gain admission to “optimal fit” college
Students receive general information about AP, honors, and dual enrollment options
Inform families of graduation and college entrance requirements
Meaningful/intentional selection of elective courses
Advising to update academic plan at least once per year
Advising to update career plan at least once per year
Advising to take a rigorous academic curriculum
Successfully complete at least ____ credits per year (TBD by school)
Advising Tier 2 Services (1-2 recommended)
Students with similar career interests are advised on job shadowing and internship opportunities
High school course selection based on career interest and education/training goals
Advising and exploration related to college “fit”
Extracurricular involvement and service learning opportunities for college entrance and resume support
Career exploration in advisory course
Small groups around common career goals
Students receive specific information about AP, honors, and dual enrollment options including course offerings and post-secondary alignment
Schedule changes with school counselor
Advising Tier 3 Services (1-2 recommended)
Credit recovery opportunities
AP and dual enrollment course selection
Education for families to assist student academic and emotionally
Honors course selection
Near-peer college advising or mentoring
Individual or small group career counseling
Intensive training programs for teachers or counselors to improve college and career advising and professional development in best practices

Suggested Data Documenting Need for Advising (TBD by CARTeams and School Planning Team):

- Number of academic plans created
- Number of academic plans reviewed
- Number of career plans created
- Number of career plans reviewed
- Up-to-date list of students behind in credits

- Quarterly list of students not on track to graduate
- Career inventory results
- Number of advising sessions completed
- Number of mentoring sessions completed
- Number of job shadows or internships completed
- Number of informational interviews completed
- Annual student interest in enrichment activities or interest clubs if available

3. *College and Career Exposure*

Goal: Students build awareness and aspirations about post-secondary options including college and careers

General Best Practices for College and Career Exposure:

1. Expose students to postsecondary options through campus visits at a variety of colleges and universities (small, large, 2-year, 4-year, public, private, etc.), including interaction with current college students.
2. Provide college affordability/financial aid information to students and families early and often
3. Implement small group or one-on-one advising to include college and career interest assessments and goal-setting.
4. Provide students with opportunities to explore careers through job shadowing, mentoring, touring career academics, and business site-visits.

College and Career Exposure Tier 1 Services (2-3 required in addition to 3-Step Process & GEAR UP Week)
College affordability/financial aid events for students and families (Iowa College Aid, College Savings Iowa, ICAN, college/university admissions or financial aid staff, etc)
National GEAR UP Week (see Appendix C for supplemental information)
College Awareness Day/Week involving students, families, and/or community
Distribute college planning and financial aid information to all students and families
Attend or host a college fair (Golden Circle, several options through Iowa Association for College Admission Counseling)
Attend or host a career fair
Invite professionals into classrooms or large group events to speak about careers and education paths
Large group college visits
Visit local career academies
Distribute information or offer workshops about dual enrollment
Complete career cluster, college interest, and college major inventories
Designate a space as a College & Career Corner to hang college pennants, scholarship info, event flyers, ACT/SAT info and other resources
Create a college planning newsletter or section on the school website
College and Career Exposure Tier 2 Services (1-2 recommended)
Small group college visits
Group mentoring with professionals about specific careers (breakfast, lunch & learns, subject specific classes, afterschool)
College visits for school counselors or advisors

College planning workshops (Intro to college, college search process, ACT/SAT test prep, application process, academic resume writing, college life)
Financial aid and scholarship search workshops
Career planning workshops (career exploration, job skills, salaries and budgets)
Optimal college fit workshop
Start a student College & Career Club
Attend a camp or event on a college campus focusing on college or career exploration
Group job shadowing
Informational interviews with college personnel or career professionals
Business site visits
Mock interviews
Speed mentoring with career professionals
Teachers incorporate college and career examples in lessons (eg. Students write an essay about choosing a college or career)
College and Career Exposure Tier 3 Services (1-2 recommended)
College and career planning for specific populations (ELL, low income, first generation, undocumented students, etc)
Individual mentoring with college student
Individual mentoring with career professional
GEAR UP Iowa Summer Student Summit
Summer programming at the school specific to college and career exploration
Intensive training programs for teachers or counselors to improve college and career advising and professional development in best practices
Individual job shadowing

Suggested Data Documenting Need for College & Career Exploration (TBD by CARTeams and School Planning Team):

- Number of mentoring groups
- Number of job shadows
- College visits based on career interests
- Number of career plans reviewed
- Career inventory results
- Number of college visits
- Number of attendees at college planning workshops and post workshop feedback

4. College Application and Enrollment

Goal: Students acquire the knowledge necessary to successfully transition into post-secondary education

General Best Practices for Application and Enrollment:

1. Connect students to colleges where they can succeed by educating them on college fit.
2. Help students understand their financial aid eligibility so they know college can be affordable.
3. Provide summer enrichment programs and college visits.
4. Engage families in the application and enrollment process.

Application and Enrollment Tier 1 Services (2-3 required in addition to 3-Step Process)
Iowa College Aid 3-Step Process: College Application Campaign, FAFSA Completion Initiative, College Decision Day (see Appendix B for supplemental information)
College application workshops (essay writing, completing the Common Application, etc)
College selection workshops (college search, types of colleges, transferring credits, etc)
Information for students and families about choosing a major based on career goals
Financial aid information and or/workshops for students and families (basics of financial aid, loans vs grants/scholarships, understanding an award letter, financial aid beyond first year, etc)
Financial Aid Family nights
FAFSA assistance for students and families
Text message or other visual reminders about application deadlines
Test taking workshops (AP, ACT/SAT, general test taking/study skills)
School celebration to highlight number of college applications
Application and Enrollment Tier 2 Services (1-2 recommended)
Text message reminders about scholarships for underrepresented students
Family guide to college
Tax preparation assistance for families
Summer orientation programs between senior year and first year of college
Mentoring and/or assistance from college students with applications and essays
Create application task list and timeline
Application and Enrollment Tier 3 Services (1-2 recommended)
Individualized college coaching with a college student mentor
Office hours with GEAR UP Iowa Facilitator or GEAR UP advisor in school if available
Summer bridge program between senior year and first year of college
Intensive training programs for teachers or counselors to improve college advising and professional development in best practices
Workshops related to self-advocacy (asking questions and having meaningful conversations with college advisors, communicating with faculty, fitting in on campus, making college your home, etc)

Suggested Data Documenting Need for Application and Enrollment (TBD by CARTeams and School Planning Team):

- Number of completed college applications
- Career inventory results to determine need for and types of workshops to be offered
- Number of college visits
- Number of attendees at related workshops and post workshop feedback
- Percentage of students that complete the FAFSA
- Percentage of students that complete college applications
- Percentage of students that took ACT/SAT assessments and their average scores
- Existing or new data related to student “optimal college fit”

5. Family Knowledge and Engagement

Goal: Students develop a comprehensive support system that contributes to their academic success

General Best Practices for Family Knowledge and Engagement:

1. Support families and their basic needs: address specific challenges to engagement; ask families the “what, how, when and where” of their engagement.
2. Communicate effectively and build trusting relationships: Use a variety of communication practices; be explicit and personal about opportunities for engagement; focus on building respectful and trusting relationships between home and school; ask families to evaluate the program and assess family engagement practices.
3. Meet families where they are. Hold meetings before another activity such as music concert or parent teacher conferences.
4. Create a school committee to organize family events and invite parents to be part of the committee. It is necessary to include parents from different racial and economic backgrounds in the committee.

Family Knowledge and Engagement Tier 1 Services (2-3 required in addition to Family Newsletter)
Quarterly family newsletter developed and distributed by Iowa College Aid (English and Spanish)
Family orientation night to provide general information about GEAR UP and items relevant to the current grade level
Beginning of the year orientation night for parents to follow student schedule, meet teachers, learn about extracurricular opportunities and ways to help students at home
Financial literacy nights
Family science nights
Family cultural events held at the school
College nights/college visits for families
Career nights
Summer program/volunteer exploration night for families to learn about available opportunities
Award or recognition event
Conduct a needs analysis or survey to determine family needs and expectations related to support their student(s)
Family Knowledge and Engagement Tier 2 Services (1-2 recommended)
Parent workshops (see Appendix D for supplemental information)
Adult Education to connect parents with educational opportunities (ESL, GED classes)
Computer classes
Parents as educators
Parent University with community partners
Family Knowledge and Engagement Tier 3 Services (1-2 recommended)
Positive home visits (see Appendix E for supplemental information)
Individual parent & counselor or GEAR UP coach meetings
Parent advocacy group
Parent advisory committee
Training programs for school staff to improve family knowledge and engagement and professional development in best practices

Suggested Data Documenting Need for Family Knowledge and Engagement (TBD by CARTeams and School Planning Team):

- Results from GEAR UP parent survey to be completed in grades 8, 10, and 12
- Attendance at family events and post event feedback
- Attendance at parent teacher conferences
- Results from internal family needs analysis or survey
- Annual student interest in enrichment activities or interest clubs if available

6. *Noncognitive Skill Development (optional)*

Goal: Students develop the noncognitive skills that are critical to their academic, career, and personal success

General Best Practices for Noncognitive Skill Development:

1. Utilize norm-referenced assessments as well as diagnostic/self-reflection activities to determine noncognitive skill deficits at student, class, and whole grade levels.
2. Implement the GEAR UP Iowa Noncognitive Curriculum into student advisory.
3. Select specific lessons from the GEAR UP Iowa Noncognitive Curriculum and integrate into existing content classes.
4. Create individualized student success plans to support students in building the noncognitive skills critical for their own success.

Noncognitive Tier 1 Services
GEAR UP Iowa noncognitive guidance curriculum in advisory
GEAR UP Iowa noncognitive lessons integrated into core courses
Students complete a GEAR UP Iowa Success Plan
Noncognitive Tier 2 Services
Small groups to build noncognitive skills (groups around specific skills such as educational commitment and time management)
Small groups or workshops based on GEAR UP Iowa Success Plans
Completion of ACT Engage
Noncognitive Tier 3 Services
Individual meetings with school counselor to discuss noncognitive skill development
Mentoring related to noncognitive skill development
Individual meetings with advisor or GEAR UP coach to discuss noncognitive skill development

Suggested Data Documenting Need for Noncognitive Skill Development (TBD by CARTeams and School Planning Team):

- ACT Engage
- Results from pre/post assessment in GEAR UP Iowa noncognitive curriculum
- Data and/or ideas from students' GEAR UP Iowa Success Plans

Appendix A: GEAR UP Iowa Objectives and Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Baseline	Data Element	Date
Objective 1: Increase the academic performance and preparation for post-secondary education of GUI students.			
PM 1: XX% of GUI students will pass Pre-Algebra (8 th grade math) by the end of 8 th grade (GPRA #1)	TBD	Passing Pre-Algebra	8 th Grade
PM 2: XX% of GUI students will pass Algebra I by the end of 9 th grade (GPRA #2)	TBD	Passing Algebra I	9 th Grade
PM 3: xx% of GUI students who take two years of math beyond Algebra I by the end of 12 th grade (GPRA #3)	TBD	Math past Algebra I	12 th Grade
PM 4a: The percentage of GUI students who perform at or above benchmark on Iowa Assessments for reading will increase 2% each year of the program until reaching 79% by the end of 11 th grade	71%	ACT Aspire, ACT	8 th - 11 th Grade
PM 4b: The percentage of GUI students who perform at or above benchmark on Iowa Assessments for math will increase 2% each year of the program until reaching 82% by the end of 11 th grade	74%	ACT Aspire, ACT	8 th - 11 th Grade
Objective 2: Increase the rate of high school graduation and enrollment in post-secondary education for GUI students.			
PM 5: The percentage of GUI students who are on track to graduate will increase 2% each year until reaching xx% at the end of 12 th grade (GPRA #9)	TBD	# of credits completed	Semi-annual
PM 6: XX% of GUI students will complete the ACT by the end of 11 th grade (GPRA #10)	TBD	ACT completion	11 th grade
PM 7: 85% of GUI students will graduate from high school (GPRA #4)	82%	Graduation	12 th Grade
PM 8: 69% of GUI students will enroll in a post-secondary institution after graduating from high school (GPRA #5)	64%	PSE enrollment	1 st year of college
PM 9: The percentage of GUI students who are prepared to place into college-level math without remediation will increase xx% each year until reaching xx% by the end of 12 th grade (GPRA #6)	TBD	Iowa Assessments	8 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 th grades
PM 10: The percentage of GUI students who are prepared to place into college-level English without remediation will increase xx% each year until reaching xx% by the end of 12 th grade (GPRA #6)	TBD	Iowa Assessments	8 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 th grades
PM 11: XX% of GUI students enrolled in a post-secondary institution who are on track to graduate from college (GPRA #7)	TBD	Credit completion	1 st year of college
Objective 3: Increase GUI students' and their families' knowledge of post-secondary education options, preparation, and financing.			
PM 12: The percentage of GUI students who have in person or electronic contact with a current college student to learn about college will increase by 4% each year of the grant until reaching 75% by the end of the 12 th grade year	55%	Survey item on college contact	Annual
PM 13: The percentage of GUI students who apply to an optimal fit college will increase 2% each year until reaching xx% of by the end of 12 th grade (Priority #2)	TBD	College application	12 th grade
PM 14: 64% of GUI students will complete the FAFSA by March of their 12 th grade year (GPRA #8)	54%	Complete FAFSA	March of 12 th grade
PM 15: The percentage of parents/guardians of GUI students who actively engage in activities to help their student's academic preparation for college will increase 4% each year of the grant until reaching 100% at the end of the 12 th grade (GPRA #11)	91%	Parent survey items on engagement	Annual
PM 16: The percentage of GUI students who understand their optimal college fit will increase 3% each year until reaching 79% at the end of 12 th grade (Priority #2)	79%	Measure of college fit	Annual
PM 17: The percentage of parents/guardians of GUI students who understand their options for paying for post-secondary education will increase 3% each year until reaching 72% by the end of the 12 th grade	57%	Parent survey items on financial options	Annual

Appendix B: GEAR UP Iowa's Commitment to the Three-Step Process

GEAR UP Iowa 1.0 (2008-2014) schools reported that College Application Campaign with seniors was among the most effective activities for engaging students in the college going process. Therefore, GEAR UP Iowa 2.0 (2014-2021) will implement the Three-Step Process across all seven years of the grant to develop a college-going culture in all partner districts.

College Application Campaign: GEAR UP Iowa students will be exposed to early college experiences through campus visits and mentoring beginning in 7th grade. Additionally, students and families will receive lessons on “college fit” in order for both audiences to gain familiarity with different types of colleges settings. During the cohort’s senior year of high school, they will receive assistance in applying to at least three colleges during College Application Campaign events.

FAFSA Completion Initiative: Using a broad array of partners GEAR UP Iowa will provide FAFSA workshop opportunities for students and families in an effort to increase the number of FAFSA applications submitted. Additionally, GEAR UP schools will have access to data regarding students who complete the FAFSA. This will allow schools to provide direct follow up with students who have not yet completed an application.

College Decision Day: GEAR UP Iowa and partner school districts will celebrate students and their college choice through College Decision Day events. Events may include formal ceremonies for students to announce their college selection, press releases in GEAR UP Iowa communities, social media announcements, and various other celebratory events.

Timeline and Goals for Implementing the 3-Step Process in GUI Schools

Year 1 (7th grade): Facilitators connect with high school counselors to share information about the 3-Step Process and encourage 7th graders to get involved if possible.

Ideas for GEAR UP student involvement: participate in college fact trivia, school staff wear college apparel, schools host financial savings workshops for families, teachers share their college story

Participation Goal: 20% of GEAR UP Iowa high schools signed up (5 out of 23 high schools)

Year 2 (8th grade): Facilitators spread message to high schools about the 3-Step Process and encourage 8th graders to get involved if possible.

Ideas for GEAR UP student involvement: wear college apparel during College Application Campaign, hold a pep rally for seniors on College Decision Day or around FAFSA Completion Initiative events, have 8th graders write motivation letters to seniors on College Decision Day

Participation Goal: 30% of GEAR UP Iowa high schools signed up (7 schools)

Year 3 (9th grade): Facilitators will work with high schools to sign up for 3-Step Process and organize at least one event. Encourage 9th graders to get involved.

Ideas for GEAR UP student involvement: pair GEAR UP students with seniors to shadow them during College Decision Day or through online college searches, teachers wear college gear and talk about experiences with GU students, show a documentary such as the *First Generation* film, Roadtrip Nation/College Board’s *Why Not Us?*, or *Underwater Dreams*

Participation Goal: 50% (12 high schools)

Year 4 (10th grade): Facilitators will work with high schools to sign up for 3-Step Process and organize more than one event. Encourage 10th graders to get involved.

Ideas for GEAR UP student involvement: hold a mini version of College Decision Day where GEAR UP students make a list of their top 5 colleges, develop a contest they can do on social media

Participation Goal: 80% (18 high schools)

Year 5 (11th grade): Facilitators will work with high schools to sign up for 3-Step Process and organize at least one event for each step of the process. Recommend 11th graders to get involved.

Ideas for GEAR UP student involvement: GEAR UP students plan one of the events, write an aspirational letter to middle school students. Involve families by inviting them to events or assisting as volunteers. Have students place a marker on a state or national map of their college choice

Participation Goal: 100% (23 high schools)

Year 6 (12th grade): Facilitators will work with high schools to sign up for 3-Step Process and organize at least one event for each step of the process. Require 12th graders to participate. Facilitators work with schools to establish a 3-Step Process guide to ensure sustainability after GU cohort leaves district.

Ideas for GEAR UP student involvement: juniors plan an event for GEAR UP seniors, hold a parent panel where last year's senior parents give advice to current parents, similar panel for students, contest between districts through Iowa College Aid/GEAR UP Iowa (# of events, # of student applications, FAFSA's, etc.), invite volunteers from college admissions or college access programs to assist with FAFSA Completion and have students and families schedule appointments, for College Decision Day, create a set-up similar to an athletic signing day and take pictures with students, admissions staff, and parents, with their college choice

Participation Goal: 100% (23 high schools)

Year 7 (FY post-secondary): Facilitators will support high schools in continuing the 3-Step Process. Serve as a resource as schools implement the events outlined in year 6.

Participation Goal: 80% (18 high schools- drop off anticipated since cohort will no longer be in high school)

Appendix C: GEAR UP Week Toolkit

GEAR UP Week is celebrated nationally each year in September and there are many ways schools can get involved.

Balloon Release - Have students write their dreams on a piece of paper and place inside a helium balloon. Set them loose at a balloon releasing ceremony and let their dreams reach the sky!

College Panels - Have recent high school alums participate in a panel about their current college experience or invite college admissions or other college staff to speak on a panel

College Spirit Day - Have faculty, staff and students wear college gear and/or colors. Have students write anything college related on the sidewalks using chalk. Have college representatives available during lunch to talk to students.

College Trivia - Give out college trivia sheets during lunch or advisory. Students with the most correct answers will receive a prize.

Door Wars - Have students and teachers decorate their homeroom or advisory classroom door with the college of their choice.

Family Night - Host a family event during GEAR UP week to get more information out about GEAR UP Iowa.

GEAR UP Dreams Wall - Cover a wall of a classroom or hallway with paper and place a large GEAR UP Iowa logo in the center with "Our GEAR UP Dreams" underneath. Ask students to write their academic, professional and personal goals on the wall. Send a picture of your students next to the sign to your U.S. Senators, U.S. Representatives and State Legislators

I Went to College Signs - Have teachers, counselors and other school staff complete "I Went to College" signs and hang next to their doors.

Letter Writing Party- Have students write college/university admissions offices requesting information

Lunch & Learn - Invite colleges or local business leaders to have lunch with students and speak about their college or experience in college.

School Announcements - Include fun facts about college in the daily announcements or display on the school televisions.

Social Media – Post comments and/or pictures on social media sites and use #NationalGEARUPWeek #MyGEARUPStory #IAmGEARUP and #GEARUPWorks.

Appendix D: Parent/Family Workshops

Workshops and information nights are a great way to involve families and engage them in the academic experience for their student. Below is a list of workshop topics that may be beneficial to GEAR UP Iowa families.

- An overview of national and school district education requirements
- Effective communication strategies for parents, students and teachers
- The central role parents play in student achievement, homework help and tutoring
- Understanding the importance of volunteerism & extracurricular activities
- Navigating financial aid
- How to get money for college
- Helping students prepare for college and career
- College 101: What is college like and why is it important?
- College 102: Types of colleges and finding the right “fit”
- Busting the myths of college
- FAFSA for families
- What if your student isn’t ready or doesn’t want to go to college?

There are many ways in which workshops can be offered but it is best to provide a variety of formats including in-person and online. It may be helpful to offer childcare, food, and translators as needed.

Appendix E: Positive Home Visits

Research consistently indicates the importance of family engagement in student learning. Home visits have the potential to build strong positive relationship among parents and schools and therefore positively impact student behavior and academic success.

Positive home visits focused on college & career readiness will be conducted with families that need additional services/support to prepare their children to enter postsecondary education (e.g. first generation college students, immigrant families).

GEAR UP Iowa will provide a toolkit and training for home visits based on the [Parent Teacher Home Visit Project model](#). Home visits will be conducted twice a year: summer/beginning of fall and spring and they will be led by counselors/teachers or GEAR UP coaches if available.

Visit #1

The primary goal of the first visit is to get to know the family and student, learn about their hopes and dreams for their child, and learn what each family expects from the school. Families and school representatives will work together to set educational goals for the student.

Visit #2

The goal of the second visit will be to discuss student's progress, celebrate success and discuss ways to address concerns, discuss student's interests and plans for postsecondary education, discuss the importance of postsecondary education, and briefly discuss financial aid.